

# BioStar

## How do you acknowledge Biostar and its contributors in your research output?

I am really impressed with Biostar. The quality of the answers here is often so good that it surely will have an influence. In a way Biostar extends the informal helping among peers of which gratitude is often expressed in the acknowledgments.


How does this work with Biostar. Should we acknowledge the system, all contributors, or both? Do you acknowledge Biostar in your output and if so, how?

[biostar](#) | [alt-metrics](#) | [acknowledgments](#)

edited **Apr 5 at 21:10**

 Chris Evelo  
3,809 ● 3 ● 16

asked **Mar 3 at 12:57**

 Andra Waagmeester  
1,709 ● 1 ● 13

## 9 Answers

Perhaps the founders and moderators of BioStar could get together and put together a publication on BioStar and their experiences in managing it, get it published. This would provide a publication to be referenced by those who want to acknowledge the site, and would provide some direct academic benefit (a publication and citations) for at least some of those who contribute.

answered **Mar 3 at 13:57**

 gawp  
722 ● 1 ● 8


Direct citations feel inappropriate since the people listed as authors of the publication may not be the same that provided the value that was essential for the author in question.

I think the best course of action would be to do two things:

1. Mention of BioStar (with a link) in the Acknowledgments, you could also mention an contributor that has helped the most, this helps the site grow
2. Send the admins (or the group) a note with the publication information. This would help us justify the importance of BioStar if we were to raise funds for supporting it

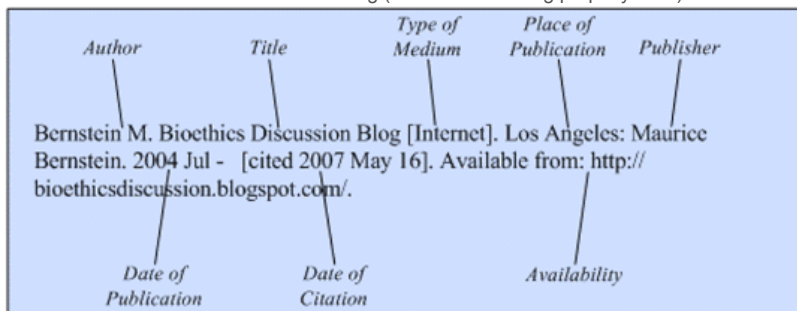
edited **Mar 3 at 14:43**

answered **Mar 3 at 14:37**

 Istvan Albert ♦♦  
6,487 ● 1 ● 4 ● 22

Actually, there is an NLM citation standard that was developed for blogs--maybe that's suitable?


Here's where we talked about it on our blog (which I'm not citing properly here)



[NLM citation standard...for blogs!](#)

All of our references to BioStar at this point have been in workshops, where we just tell everyone how cool this community is and give them the URL. Sometimes we put the flyer we made in the workshop packets if we have some printed up.

answered **Mar 3 at 14:49**

 Mary ♦  
3,565 ● 3 ● 15

I didn't thank BioStar specifically, but in my [latest paper](#), I included the following line:

We thank the communities at stats.stackexchange.com and stackoverflow.com for useful advice concerning

statistics and R.

In my opinion, that's adequate. It's just like if you spent 5 minutes talking to the statistician down the hall about which distribution to use. It probably wasn't a substantial enough contribution to warrant an authorship, but an acknowledgement of their contribution is fitting.

answered Mar 3 at 15:41



Chris Miller ♦

2,833 ● 1 ● 20

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[Datacite](#) could be used to assign DOIs to questions. It's relatively easy to mint DOIs using their API (I have code to do so if anyone's interested), once you are authorised to do so (which at the moment is just a matter of asking I believe).

DOIs do not automatically make an object citable, but they do seem to carry a certain cachet among particular circles (ie publishing ones) that a URI simply doesn't (though there is no reason why it shouldn't).

answered Mar 3 at 16:20



Simon Cockell ♦

3,694 ● 1 ● 6 ● 22

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I had the opportunity to thank Biostar in some presentations: e.g: slide #3 of <http://www.slideshare.net/lindenb/20101210-ngscourse> , or in my [blog](#).

answered Mar 3 at 13:09



Pierre Lindenbaum ♦♦

18.5k ● 1 ● 11 ● 39

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Earlier this year we published a short paper on how to give feedback to annotation databases, and what to do when encountering errors in the data.

Dall'Olio GM, Bertranpetit J, Laayouni H. The annotation and the usage of scientific databases could be improved with public issue tracker software. Database (Oxford). 2010 Dec 23;2010:baq035. Print 2010. PubMed PMID: 21186182; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC3011984. Available from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3011984> .

During the writing we opened some questions on biostar ([example](#)) and followed some discussions on the site, to know what was the opinion of the rest of the scientific community about some of the databases described. These discussions have helped us improving the manuscript, although we could have probably have been able to do it even without them.

At the end, we acknowledged biostar in a generic form without explaining in details which discussions we had opened and why we were acknowledging biostar. This is from the paper:

We would like to thank the community at <http://biostar.stackexchange.com/> for useful discussion.

On a side note, the people who follow the [biostar mailing list](#) will already know that a manuscript is currently being prepared for submission to a Bioinformatics related journal. I will leave the description of how I have cited biostar in a paper, as an example of when and how I consider necessary to cite it or acknowledge.

answered Apr 4 at 15:05



Giovanni M Dall'Olio ♦

6,361 ● 1 ● 7 ● 26

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I was just about to ask the same question! For example, the answers in <http://biostar.stackexchange.com/questions/5873/how-to-retrieve-gene-variations-from-ensembl-using-the-perl-api> literally taught me how to get the data right, and probably saved several hours of work !!!

My choice is to acknowledge the community in the paper. But, a mechanism to cite a question directly would be much more valuable for both Biostar and the readers of the article. The Datacite hinted by Simon seems perfect. I think that questions like that one should be cited, not just acknowledged. At least, answers provided a technical support like any methodological paper. In other cases, answers provided insightful advice in how to gather and treat data. That's non-trivial! Do not configure authorship but probably deserves a full citation!

That's my opinion.

edited Apr 5 at 21:16



Chris Evelo

answered Mar 4 at 3:46



Jarretinha ♦

2,204 ● 1 ● 10

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I have come across a few questions and answers where people mention ideas that could really lead to new research efforts and publications. In other words you would take the original idea for that work from a BioStar question. Of course based on what is said above and the Creative Commons license you would have to somehow acknowledge that. But that in such cases it would make more sense to contact the person who

somenow acknowledge that. But I think in such cases it would make more sense to contact the person whose idea you are going to use and discuss what should be done. Depending on the importance of the idea for the publication it could even make sense to offer a co-authorship. In such cases the discussion will likely also lead to a better publication.

edited Apr 16 at 12:36

answered Apr 16 at 12:28



Chris Evelo

3,809 ● 3 ● 16

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### Answer Your Question

Notify [andra.waagmeester@maastricht](mailto:andra.waagmeester@maastricht) daily of any new answers

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